



artsdepot Christmas show tickets to be won

Do you fancy a family outing to the theatre to catch a bit of Christmas magic? We have tickets to give away for *Catching Father Christmas*, which runs at artsdepot in North Finchley until 2 January.



A scene from *Catching Father Christmas*, coming to artsdepot.

The show tells the story of Amy, who lies awake excitedly on Christmas Eve waiting for Father Christmas to arrive. This year, she is determined to accomplish what no one else has done: to catch Father Christmas.

What Amy doesn't realise is that there are plenty of others with the same idea. As her clothes, furniture and even the sneaky Christmas decorations come to life, Amy quickly realises that instead of trying

to catch him, she has to protect Father Christmas instead.

Brought to the stage for the first time in the UK, it's a magical adventure for anyone aged four and above. Performances are daily at 12pm and 3pm, except on 17, 19 and 22 December, when they're at and at 3pm and 7pm. A signed performance takes place on Saturday 18 December at 3pm. Tickets can be booked at the box office on 020 8369 5454.

To win a family ticket for the performance at 12pm on Tuesday 28 December, courtesy of artsdepot, send your name and contact details by email to the-archer@lineone.net or by post to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA. One winner will be chosen at random after the closing date on Friday 17 December.

Pharmacy opening times

Pharmacy opening times for the holiday season are as follows:
25 December: CW Andrews, 32 High Road, N2;
26 December: Boots, 788 High Road, North Finchley, N12;
27 December: Tesco Pharmacy,

Ballards Lane, N3;
28 December: Oakdale Pharmacy, Viceroy Parade, N2;
1 January: Charles Sampson, 800 High Street, N12;
3 January: Oakdale Pharmacy, Viceroy Parade, N2.

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Radosnego Bozego Narodzenia*

By Ann Bronkhorst

For Polish children like three-year-old Daniel the excitement of Christmas begins on 6 December when St Nicholas leaves small gifts, not in stockings but under pillows. For Daniel's parents, Tomas and Ewa, who run the Polish Deli at 36 High Road, December will mean their usual hard work, but with extra Christmas specialities to display in the shop.

The first star

Tomas remembers traditional childhood Christmases on his grandmother's farm, with homemade food, deep snow in the forest and no glittering street decorations because, as he says, there were no streets. Even today, most Polish people fast on Christmas Eve, consuming no alcohol, meat or anything sweet until the first star appears. Then special bread is shared out before the family meal (of fish) and wishes are made for the coming year. The Christ-child's birth is celebrated at Midnight Mass, as in many Christian cultures.

At their shop, Ewa and Tomas display Polish greeting cards and a tree decorated in the modern way, although Tomas recalls fondly the childhood tree hung with his grandmother's simple home-made baubles: walnuts wrapped in silver foil bound round with ribbons. The shop stocks many special foods, including fresh and pre-cooked carp, traditionally eaten once a year. They won't have live fish for sale, though some households in Poland keep live carp in the bath for a few days before Christmas Eve.

Other delicacies stocked include the ingredients for making Polish borscht (beetroot soup); little mushroom dump-



Ewa and Tomas looking forward to Christmas. Photo by Ann Bronkhorst

plings; homemade poppyseed cakes; and the wheat kernels, nuts, poppyseed and honey that go into Kutia, a delicious Russian dessert.

The Christmas spirit

Many Polish families here still observe the old Christmas traditions but it can be lonely for individuals who are far away from home. St Philip the Apostle, Gravel Hill, Finchley N3 is a local Catholic church where members of the Polish community gather at Christmas and find friendship and support. For details of regular and seasonal worship at the church, and

social activities, contact Father Kawczy at kawczy@wp.pl

* A traditional Polish greeting at Christmas. Tomas and Ewa will translate in full if you pop in to see them.

Delivered down under

THE ARCHER has a loyal readership of ex-pats in Australia. One is Douglas Darville, whose brother Fred, of The Mead, N2, dispatches a copy of the paper to him every month. Here, Fred sends Christmas wishes through our pages.

Douglas lived in Beresford Road before going to Australia in the late 1950s. He took with him his five children, two girls and three boys, and also his in-laws Sid and Lily Effer, who lived in Church Lane. Sid was an ex-Dunkirk man and served three years with the 8th Army.

Douglas's two girls went to Holy Trinity School in East End Road, and transferred to North Finchley while the school at Eagans Close was being built.

During the war, Douglas was a volunteer air raid warden. He had two narrow escapes, one at Dickens Avenue where he was 75 yards away when a huge bomb destroyed four houses. The other was when a parachute mine dropped behind the drill hall at the bottom of Squires Lane.

Douglas joined the RAF and after being demobbed was a self-employed builder. He now lives in Frankston, near Melbourne, close to his five children and eight grandchildren. Now in his 80s, he is enjoying his retirement. All of his friends in East Finchley wish him a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Christmas services

East Finchley Baptist Church

Sun 19 Dec: 10.30-11.45am, All Ages Together Carol Service; 6-7.15pm Carols by Candlelight. **Sat 25 Dec:** 10.30-11.15am, Christmas morning family service. **Sun 26 Dec:** 10.30-11.30am, Communion Service.

Holy Trinity Church

Wednesday 1 Dec: 2pm, Holy Trinity School Christingle. **Sun 19 Dec:** 10am, Parish Communion; 6pm, Carol Service. **Fri 24 Dec:** 4pm, Nativity Play/blessing of the Crib; 11.30pm, Midnight Mass (Bishop of Edmonton). **Sat 25 Dec:** 10am, Parish Communion. **Sun 26 Dec:** 10am, Parish Communion.

All Saints' Church

Sun 19 Dec: 6.30pm, Christmas Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies. **Fri 24 Dec:** 3pm, Children's Christmas Service with Carols; 11.30pm, Sung Midnight Mass with Blessing of

the Crib. **Sat 25 Dec:** 8am, Mass of the Dawn; 10am, Sung Mass of the Day.

St Mary's Catholic Church

Sun 19 Dec: 6.30pm, Carol Service. **Mon 20 Dec:** 7.30pm, Advent Penitential Service. **Fri 24 Dec:** 6.30pm, Children's Christmas Mass; 10pm, 'Midnight' Mass. **Sat 25 Dec:** Masses at 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon. **Sun 26 Dec:** St Stephen's Day Masses at 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon.

East Finchley Methodist Church

Sun 5 Dec: 10.30am, Christingle and Holy Communion. **Sun 12 Dec:** 10.30am, Christmas Gift Service for Deptford Mission and H.A.B. (Homeless Action in Barnet). **Sun 19 Dec:** 10.30am, Nativity Service; 5pm, Carols by Candlelight, carol singing for everyone, plus Christmas music items, mince pies and refreshments afterwards. **Sat 25 Dec:** 10.30am, Christmas Day Celebration Service.

DO JOIN US THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

EAST FINCHLEY METHODIST CHURCH

197 High Road, London N2 (opp. Creighton Ave.)
www.eastfinchleymethodist.org.uk

Carols by Candlelight

Sunday 19 December, 5.00 p.m.

Christmas Day Family Service - 10.30 a.m.

tel: 020 8346 1700

e-mail: info@eastfinchleymethodist.org.uk